

and render valid a title once vicious. I deny it. By what process can vice become virtue, or that which is stealthily acquired become the goods of honest industry? The voice of justice then demands that England relinquish her hold on Ireland; but to this holy and equitable demand, she, the model of modern civilization, lends a deaf ear.

What then must the Irish do to recover their just and equitable rights? They must be *honestly united in this country and in Ireland*. There must be *unity of action, unity of purpose*. They must have their forces marshaled and ready when an opportunity presents itself and strike a bold blow for freedom. They must keep their own secrets and not let their arch-enemy know by whom or how this blow is to be struck. Lastly, where they know England to be the most vulnerable, there they must attack her. That the Fenians will yet humble England is my firm conviction, and that they will soon repay her for her judicial murders is the fond hope cherished by your correspondent.

SHANDY.

Officers of the I. R. A.

BOSTON, December 9, 1867.

To the Editors of The Irish Republic.

GENTLEMEN: In a communication, dated October 10th, I asked the question—speaking of the officers of the I. R. A.—“Have we any now?” The question seems to have troubled the Secretary of War so much that he undertook to answer it; and in my humble opinion he has succeeded in making it as “clear as mud.”

The General says that “all applicants, as well as those recommended, are brought before a proper military board, consisting of old and tried officers.” I would like to know if it is necessary for all applicants to go to New York to pass the “Board” before they can get a commission? Must an applicant come from California, Omaha, or any and every State, to New York?

If, as I suggested, Inspectors were appointed for each State, would it not be just as proper for the President to approve of the Inspectors’ selection as that of the Board? At all events, it would be easier for the Inspector to find out the character of the applicant, if that is necessary, than it would be for the Board. The General says when a commission is issued an “order promulgating the same is published for the information and guidance of all concerned.” There is a party in Boston, claiming to be a “captain” in the I. R. A., of whom the Brotherhood in this city have never heard from headquarters; but perhaps we are not “concerned.”

I do not question the ability of the gentlemen at headquarters to select proper officers for our army; but, in a war like that in which we will soon be engaged, favoritism should not be allowed to sway a feather’s weight in appointments. The proper qualities for commanders, from a general-in-chief to a captain, are well known—quite as well known as those desirable in the mass of soldiery; and equal judgment ought to be brought to bear upon the two.

My principal reason for alluding to the officers of our army, is the lack of discipline to be found in every company that I have seen so far. I have seen nearly all the companies that are in New York city—being near the Board, they should be as near perfection as possible—and many in Massachusetts, and, to draw it mildly, there is room for improvement in them all.

Captain Bracken and another gentleman addressed a public meeting at the hall of the Emmet Circle on Friday evening, November 29th. The meeting was convened on a new principle in Boston, (tickets being issued by the Circle, free, thus getting rid of the usual crowd at all public meetings, who attend merely to howl and make a noise,) and resulted in a quiet, orderly meeting. After eloquent addresses by Captain Bracken and W. J. Hines, and our eloquent District Center, twenty-five good men and true joined their fortunes with the Emmets.

We hope to restore Boston to her former position in the Brotherhood during the winter.

Yours fraternally, L. E. G.

[We draw the attention of all concerned to this excellent idea of the Emmet Circle of Boston in the issuing of tickets for meetings. What is the use in bringing the riff-raff of communities to Fenian meetings. Fellows who sit with mouths open to swallow the “eloquent gas” and do nothing?]

The Soldier's Letter.

COLUMBIA, S. C., December 9, 1867.

To the Editors of The Irish Republic.

GENTLEMEN: I wish to renew my subscription for six months more, and in doing so I wish to say that I am well satisfied with the determined spirit of liberty that your journal continues to advocate. I am well aware that you have a large mass of scheming tyrants and ignorant boobies, both lay and cleric, to encounter. In all lands there are infernal rascals, who manage to keep the people in slavery and misery for their own selfish gains. They are now fuming with wrath at the few brave men who dare to advocate the right of all to life, liberty and the fruit of honest labor. This is not to be wondered at, when we call to our minds the determined hostility and treachery which our Lord and Saviour had to combat in liberating the souls of men. In like manner, our Eternal Father has at various times urged

men to stand up and demand the liberation of His persecuted children. Did He not send Moses to Egypt to liberate the Jews who were kept there in slavery? Did He not supply Moses with the necessary means to compel the Egyptian tyrants to loosen their grip from off the necks of His people? If God was in past ages the friend of the oppressed and of liberty, how can He be otherwise now? Or is it possible that He has become the friend of the tyrants and murderers of the present day, and the enemy of the outraged and oppressed? Mankind cannot believe it, as God is unchangeable. What say you, Bishop Moriarty; and that host of other divines who have sounded your clerical horns in the following style: “Irish slaves, you must bear with every description of persecution that your infamous masters invent. You must allow yourselves to be robbed and murdered, driven from your native soil and sent adrift to the swamps and backwoods of America. Dastard slaves, dare not, at your peril, raise a hand to strike for your rights. Infamous Fenians, you threaten to disturb that blessed peace that has for seven hundred years sent millions of our race into famine graves. We shall curse you, and withhold from you the rites of your Church. Nay, that hell by which we have made independent fortunes in the past is not hot enough nor long enough to burn up your miserable slavish souls.” This is the cry of men who pretend to move in God’s footsteps. Lucky for Moses that he does not live in these days. If he did, and that he moved by the Divine command to liberate his people out of English bondage, I have no doubt but that he would be told “hell is not hot enough nor eternity long enough to burn you up, or any other traitor that may attempt to disturb the peace that is death to the slave.”

Hoping that a just God shall unite men of all creeds and nationalities, and strengthen them so they may forever put an end to the tyrants of the earth, and that all men shall be equal before the law, I am, gentlemen, a soldier in the Fifth Artillery,

D. W.

Who Do We Belong To!

MINNEAPOLIS, December 16, 1867.

To the Editors of The Irish Republic.

GENTLEMEN: Allow me, through the columns of your widely-circulated journal, to offer to my countrymen in the United States my best advice, which is: That we all, in the several cities and towns throughout the States, do assemble and make a huge bonfire of our naturalization papers.

I offer this advice with the best of intentions, as all may see, when they look at this matter in its true light; for, should any of us ever wish to revisit our native shores, it is evident that we are more likely to be treated harshly and rigorously by the British Government for being naturalized citizens of these United States, than if we retained our original position of British subjects. Better to continue as subjects of a power that can and does protect its people, than become or remain citizens of a power that cannot and does not so protect them. Of course, this will not interfere with our right to live here and grow rich; and in case of war we can claim British protection (!) and be sent home like others, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Italians, etc. We shall then be enabled to enjoy all the rights and privileges of two countries and only owe allegiance to one; whereas, now we are merely allowed to exist by courtesy in one with only partial rights, and liable at any moment to be gobbled up by any other country that may choose to claim us as *runaway slaves*!

Now this is entirely wrong; for, ain’t we Britons? Vide the latest English judicial verdict. And you know the song says that Britons never, never, never shall be slaves!

Hurra for American citizenship, and bully for Andy and Billy.

Yours,

AN AMERICAN-IRISH-ENGLISH CITIZEN.

THE OMNIBUS.

The History and Poetry of Bells.

Jones and Company, the great bell founders of Troy, New York, have published a pamphlet about bells, from which we glean some interesting and instructive facts. Now that the season of bells is at hand, when the Christmas chimes ring out over Christendom, proclaiming “peace on earth, good will to men,” the history of bells will be doubly appropriate:

As to the exact origin of bells history has given no definite account. The sonorous properties of certain metals and combinations of metals were known at a very early period, though the bell as known to our time is not an instrument of so great antiquity. Small tinkling instruments are mentioned by the old Hebrew writers as having been used as ornaments or appendages to the dress or tunics worn by the high priests, and persons of distinction, but as to their shape nothing definite has been recorded. The origin of the name is from the old Saxon word *bellan*, to bawl or bellow. The Hebrew word translated by the English word bell is susceptible of other translations. It meant any instrument that made a tinkling sound, and hence the instruments attached to the robes of priests to give notice of their approach to the sanctuary were probably ornamental contrivances, which made a noise when they were moved. In those instruments, however, whatever shape they may have had, we have the origin of the principle of the bell. The bell is used to this day, in Roman Catholic countries, for a similar purpose to that recorded in scripture; especially is it now used by the priest as he proceeds to render the rite of extreme unction to the soul that is passing away; and so when the bell is

tinkled, in administering the sacrament, by the same priest, it is in pursuance of a custom founded on the ancient Hebrew use of it. Perhaps no instrument of music (for it is ranked by musicians among the musical instruments of percussion) is more intimately associated with the religious and imaginative, as also with the most joyous and saddest feelings of mankind. A quaint old writer has described their threefold duties thus:

To call the fold to church in time,
We chime.
When joy and mirth are on the wing,
We ring.
When we lament a departed soul,
We toll.

Those small bells were used in the early ages for civil, military and religious purposes, and bells of a larger make are extensively used in our day for civil and religious purposes also. The first use of bells in Christian churches to call people to prayer or service, of which we have any record, was by St. Paulinus, in Campania, about the year 395 of the Christian era, after which it was gradually introduced into all churches of every denomination in the world. More or less sacredness, superstition and importance were attached to them and their use. By the Roman Catholics they are solemnly blessed, as they are consecrated to their holy work of summoning worshippers to their religious rites. From the circumstance of the bell receiving a name, and being washed with holy water, the ceremony is frequently called the baptism of bells. No form of baptism, however, is used. There is something poetical, at the same time playful, in the custom of giving the bell sponsors, who are usually persons who have presented the bell to the church, or who contribute handsomely to the expense of purchasing it, at the time of blessing. Chrism and oil are used in the ceremony of benediction, and in all the more solemn consecrations of utensils employed in the divine service. This consecration of bells dates back to a very early period. In Charlemagne’s Capitulary of 787 we find the prohibition “*ut cloceat baptizetur*,” and in the old liturgies of the Catholic Church is a form of consecration directing the priests to wash the bell with water, anoint it with oil and mark it with the sign of the cross, in the name of the Trinity. The practice of naming bells was also an early one—as far back as 968, when John XIII. named the great bell of the Lateran church, for himself, John. In Catholic churches is now in constant use what is denominated the Sanctus bell, a small instrument rung by an attendant just previous to the elevation of the Host, in order to fix the attention of the people. It was formerly larger and hung in the outer turret of the church, and was rung at the words “*Sancte, sancte, sancte, Deus Sabaoth*,” when all the people within hearing, in or out of church, were enjoined to bow in adoration. The Ave Maria bell was rung at fixed hours to remind all to offer supplication to the Virgin, and to mark the hours of beginning and cessation of labor. The Vesper bell, immortalized by poets, was the call to evening prayer; the Complin bell summoned the people to the last religious services of the day. The passing bell was rung among the ancient customs that those who heard it might pray for the soul that was leaving this world, and this practice gave rise to the superstition which gives the bell a mysterious connection with departed spirits; and the belief has extensively prevailed that the evil spirits, waiting to seize the stranger about entering their domain, are driven off in terror at its sound, and leave the neophyte an entrance free and unobstructed to the world of spirits, and at the gate of his own choosing. From this old custom probably is derived that of tolling bells at funerals, practiced in our day; also that practiced in many localities of tolling the bell immediately after death, the number of times of striking it indicating the age in years of the deceased. It is also rung while the procession is marching to the grave and the corpse is being lowered into the ground. The bell was also used in Catholic churches during the ceremony of excommunication. There were almost numberless superstitions in connection with the bell many centuries ago: disconcerting evil spirits, preventing eclipses, averting tempests, preventing infections, abating lightnings, and many other things equally absurd, as they were supposed to be caused by evil spirits, who would be driven off by the sound of the bell.

Some historians tell us that William the Conqueror introduced into England from France the custom of ringing the Curfew bell, which “told the hour of parting day.” Others say the good King Alfred introduced the custom. It consisted of ringing a bell at eight or nine o’clock in the evening, when everyone was expected to extinguish fire and lights in the house and retire. It was called curfew from this latter circumstance, which is from the French words *couvre feu*, cover fire. Hence, when, at a later day, the “curfew tolled the knell of parting day,” there was no reason why, in its origin or associations, one should feel especially sad. This practice of ringing a bell at a certain hour was not peculiar to England, for it prevailed to a considerable extent in all the countries on the continent; as the buildings were generally of wood, it was intended, at a later period, as a precaution against fires, which were common, and the arbitrary law of compelling all to retire was abolished or gradually abandoned. The passing and curfew bells are still represented in some New England and New York villages; the one as a funeral procession slowly winds its way to the graveyard, and the other by the nine o’clock bell, which hints to all the time for visiting to cease, and preparations to be made for retiring—an hour later than in the time of William the Conqueror, it is true, but yet, in general, an hour or two too early, even for the quiet residents of New England towns.

As a signal to call people together to join in any concerted action, the bell has been used from remote times; the feast of Osiris was announced by the ringing of bells, and the same sound to this day notifies hungry mortals the time to join in satisfying their appetite. The Romans announced the time of bathing by ringing of bells; and the early Christians made use of this method to designate the hour of prayer, a practice kept up by Roman Catholics in the ringing of the Angelus at morn, noon and night, at the sound of which Catholics are expected to join in this rite; and by the Protestant, in the church-going bell, which summons him to devotion. In Britain, bells were applied to church purposes before the conclusion of the seventh century, in the monastic societies of Northumbria, and even as early as the sixth in those of Caledonia. They were, therefore, used from the first erection of parish churches. Those of France and England appear to have been furnished with several bells. In France, bells were sometimes made of iron; and in England, as formerly at Rome, they were frequently of brass. In